

Of New Years Eve Parties and Secret Kisses by Vestina

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Summary: Jonathan's mother drags him to the Wheeler's New Years Eve Party. And yeah, he hasn't really talked to Nancy since the incident. So here's to hoping he doesn't make a fool of himself.

Of New Years Eve Parties and Secret Kisses

The cars are lined up along the street, so if he wants to park anywhere near the Wheeler's house, he's going to have to make a u-turn and park on the other side. He drops his mom and Will off in front of the driveway.

"You're coming in, right, honey?" his mother asks in that tone of hers.

"Yeah Mom, of course."

Will rolls his eyes from the back seat. "He wants to see his girlfriend."

"Shut up, Will," Jonathan mutters.

"Just saying..."

"Yeah, whatever. Just get out of the car."

They do, and he wheels the car into a driveway a few doors down, turning the car around so he can park on the street.

The snow crunches under his boots as he steps out, and he trudges up the road, stuffing his hands into his pockets so the chill doesn't get to them.

A car turns into the driveway just as he does, and he has to jump out of the way to avoid getting hit. Dustin is out of the passenger side door before he can even quite register what's happening, and when he looks back at the driver's side, it's Steve behind the wheel.

"Don't worry," Steve drawls through the rolled down window. "It's not like I'm coming in."

"I'm not stopping you," Jonathan says, internally cursing himself for not trying to come across as more of a badass.

"Yeah, Byers, you're really not the one I'm worried about." He juts his chin toward the house where through the window, Billy stands in the living room, seemingly schmoozing with Mrs. Wheeler.

"Oh."

"Yeah, I'm not looking for a fight tonight."

Jonathan presses his lips together and gives a short nod, his eyes down cast.

"Hey, Byers."

"Yeah."

"Just keep him away from her, okay?"

A small smile tugs at the corner of Jonathan's mouth. "I'll do my best, but she can handle herself."

"No truer words, man." And then Steve's backing out of the driveway, presumably on his way to some other New Year's Eve party, and it's just Jonathan again in the cold.

Christmas lights twinkle over the Wheeler's front door, illuminating the snow in a spectrum of colors. He raps softly on the door, shifting his weight from foot to foot because, damn it's cold, and he did not bring the right jacket for this weather. He hear Mike's voice from inside shouting, "Yeah, Mom! I'll get it." The door wrenches open, and Mike says, "Hey, Jonathan."

"Hey." He steps inside. The smell of peppermint and gingerbread hang heavy in the air as he strips his coat off his shoulders, hanging it in the closet the Mike shows him. He stands awkwardly in the foyer for a moment, after Mike scampers back to his friends, unsure of why he really agreed to come to this party.

Because it's been ages since he's talked to her. Weeks.

Yeah, there were a couple words at the Snow Ball, but they were brief and overshadowed by their siblings.

He'd spent a lot of time with Will in the days after they'd smoked the Mindflyer out of him. Mostly so their mom would worry so much. There had been the mandatory week with their dad for Thanksgiving. That had been hell, but he'd made it through with his Walkman

attached to his ears for most of it.

So, no, contrary to Will's comments in the car, she is not his girlfriend.

He makes his way into the kitchen and immediately regrets it. It's crowded with Dustin and Max and Lucas all scrambling for the appetizers, and his mother trying to make conversation with Mrs. Wheeler who is in the midst of taking a tray of something out of the oven, but keeps glancing over her shoulder toward the corner where Billy stands smoking a cigarette.

Yeah, there's no way he's going near that mess.

He debates for a moment going into the living room where the cheers from the football game are echoing out into the hall. But he knows how that would go, him slouching in some chair, wasting away the hours watching grown men make fools of themselves over some game he couldn't care less about.

He could go find her.

But part of him thinks he'd need a beer first.

Which is stupid because he shouldn't be fucking nervous around her. She's funny and smart, and kind.

But he's worried that it's been too long, that she's moved on while he's still dreaming about her when he shuts his eyes.

Yeah, he's got to stop being so fucking melodramatic.

So he goes to the kitchen, which has mostly cleared out by now, the kids heading down to the basement, his mom having moved out to the foyer to chat with whoever else is here. It's just Lucas' little sister Erica judging him when he pulls a beer from the fridge.

"I see you," she taunts.

"You want one too?"

She huffs and takes a swig from her cup of lemonade, prancing off

down the hall.

He's rummaging through the drawers looking for a bottle opener when he hears her voice. "What're you looking for?"

He startles, dropping a host of measuring spoons on the floor. "Oh, I um..." he stammers, trying to recover his composure. He squats to pick up the measuring spoons, tossing them back in the drawer. "I, uh..." he glances at the beer sitting on the counter.

She bites her bottom lip to keep her smile from spreading too wide. She passed him her elbow bumping him softly as she pulls open the drawer behind him. Hands him the bottle opener.

Except now she's standing extremely close to him.

"Ah, thanks," he says, taking a step back to the bottle of beer.

He takes a soft swig, conscious of how his Adam's Apple bobs in his throat. He offers her the bottle.

"Trying to get me tipsy, Byers?"

"Only if you want."

"Okay." Her fingers brush his softly as she takes it from him. She takes a sip, her nose scrunching as the bitter liquid goes down her Throat. "Fuck," she chokes. He reaches behind him, grabbing a bowl of pretzels to cleanse her palate.

"Yeah, it's pretty shit beer."

"You know what you should try?" she says around a mouthful of pretzels. "The roasted almonds." She hops around to the other side of the counter
They're fan-"

She stops short when the sound of footsteps comes. They both look up.

Billy's rippled figure looms in the door frame. "Well, well. Who do we have here?" he saunters toward them, that disgusting smirk flickering

over his lips. His eyes lock with Nancy's. "You went from one loser to a bigger loser. Can't imagine why you think he's worth your time."

Jonathan feels his ears got hot, and he doesn't even care about the implication that Billy's words are about him. He can't get past the sheer disgust that coils in his veins at how close Billy is to her.

But Billy's not even looking at him when he opens his mouth again, uncomfortably close to Nancy's face. "Did you hear I left little baby Steve a snivelling mess the last time I saw him? To the victor goes the spoils, right? What do you say, baby?" Billy reaches out, his fingers grazing a loose wisp of Nancy's hair.

Her hand shoots up, squeezing his wrist, and Jonathan can only imagine the dig of her fingernails in his skin, relishes in the idea that she'll have patterned his hand with little half-moons. "Get. Your. Fucking. Hands. Off. Me," she bites out.

She releases his hand, and he throws his other one up in mock defeat. "Sorry, didn't realize you were such a frosty bitch. And her I was going to invite you to be my New Year's kiss."

Jonathan lunges around the counter, his hip slamming into the corner. She steps in front of him, blocking the path between his fist and Billy's throat.

"Even if you weren't already flirting with my *mother*, I would still say no," she spits out. Except now her fingers are slipping around his wrist, holding him there so that he can't end up in the police station like last time. Her palm slips against his, her finger tangling in his longer ones.

Billy narrows his eyes at their entwined hands, but doesn't respond to her accusation.

Seconds tick by.

"Fine," he says after a moment. And then to Jonathan: "Don't let her turn your dick turn into a popsicle when you fuck her tonight."

And then, impossibly, he's gone. Jonathan hears the screen of the front door slam and the loud roar of Billy's car outside as the engine

coughs through the cold and sputters off down the street.

They stand there for a long moment in complete silence.

"Is it true?" he finally asks.

"What?"

"That he was flirting with your mother?"

She rolls her eyes. "More like he eggs my mother into flirting with him. I'm pretty sure that's why she hosted this party, so that he'd be here."

"...Damn."

"Damn indeed."

He runs his fingers through his hair. "I, uh, I just wanted you to know that... that I wasn't planning... that I wasn't expecting... what he said about... I mean..."

"Yeah?" she says softly.

"We don't have to," his voice goes quiet, "fuck tonight."

"Okay," she says. But somehow her face is now very close to his, their fingers still intertwined from before. He stills when her lips press into his, softly, and then more urgently, coercing him to kiss her back.

He pulls back when an impatient "ahem" startles them both. Somehow, it's Erica again, her arms crossed like a pint sized diva. "I'm trying to get another cookie," she says, "if you two would just move."

"Yeah, sorry," Nancy says, and they awkwardly shuffle out of the way. She grabs a couple beers, leads him into the sitting room where it's quiet and cold. Tosses him a blanket as she curls up in one of the large armchairs. He takes the one across from her, wrapping his lanky limbs in the woolen throw.

"It's been awhile," she says, "since I've seen you."

"Yeah," he says back, not really sure what else to say.

"Mike's doing better, I think, now that Eleven is back. Except that Mom worries that they're kissing everytime they go into the basement."

"Shit are they even old enough for that?"

And, somehow, even though it's not really that funny, it makes her laugh.

And they sit there, for awhile, on separate armchairs, sipping beer and giggling like idiots.

At some point, maybe around 10:30, his mother stumbles in, clearly more intoxicated than he's ever seen her. "There you are, Jonathan! I want to go home."

Hopper's head peaks through the door behind her, his eyebrows knitting together when he spots the beer bottle in Jonathan's hand. "Yeah, the kid's not driving you home."

Jonathan tries his best to look sheepish. "Sorry, Hop."

"Yeah, I'll let you off with a free pass this time, but if I ever see you underage drinking again-" he gives them both a stern look that probably isn't striking as much fear as he would have hoped.

"I need to go to sleep," his mother groans.

Hopper sighs. "I'll take her home, but you owe me one, kid. You gotta bring Eleven home. One thirty sharp."

"Will do. Thanks Hopper."

After they've left, she turns to him. "You don't think there's anything between those two, right?"

"What? My mom and Hopper? Fuck, I hope not. That'd be..."

"Fucking weird?" she suggests.

"Fucking weird is right."

"Hey Jon," she says.

"Yeah?"

"Don't let me fall asleep before midnight."

"Don't worry. I'll keep talking."

"Ok."

And when midnight comes around an hour later, she drags him into the living room, where the kids have come up from the basement and the group of parents, to watch the ball drop. She hovers with him, in the back, in the corner where they aren't seen kissing when the clock strikes midnight. It's soft and sweet and subtle, and he is struck by the easy chemistry they have, that even after all of their awkward tension, this can still feel right.

She pulls away after a moment, her eyes bright with happiness, and he can't resist leaning down one more time for a quick peck.

The living room empties out pretty quickly after that, the other parents bundling up to go out to their cars and brave the frigid night air. Jonathan gets roped into driving Max home as well (Dustin and Max are allowed to spend the night in the basement with Mike), the kids whining about how they need just a little more time to finish their game of D&D.

"One o'clock," he says, looking Will in the eye. You have to be ready to go by one o'clock, or Hopper's going to hunt me down, and you too." He stares down Max, who shrugs and Eleven who stares back with her kohl-rimmed eyes until it's creepy. "One o'clock," he repeats.

"Yeah, I heard you the first time," Will groans. And then the six of them scamper down to the basement, their footsteps clanging down the stairs.

"So," she says, turning to him. "We've got forty-five minutes."

"Yeah."

"And my parents are both passed out drunk on the couch." She points over her shoulder. "I know you said we didn't have to sleep together tonight, but if you wanted to..." She stares down at her fingers softly playing with his.

"Okay," he says, and then she's leading him up the stairs, to her bedroom where the walls are painted pink (something etched into his memory from that one time he spent the night). His hands find her hips as she shuts the door quietly over his shoulder.

He brushes her hair behind her ear, and her hand comes up, encircling his wrist, pressing it closer to her face.

"Are you sure?" he asks.

"Definitely," she says. And then she's kissing him, her lips warm against his. He pulls her hips closer, grinning as he deepens the kiss, his tongue brushing past her teeth. Her fingers tangle in the hair at the nape of his neck, and she pulls him back toward the bed. He nearly collapses on top of her, transfixed by the slope of her neck and the curve of her shoulder, letting his lips drop to her exposed skin.

"Babe," she murmurs, running her fingers under the hem of his shirt, "You gotta hurry this up. We don't have forever."

He smiles into her neck, letting her pull her blouse over her head. He's not entirely sure how the rest of their clothes come off, if it's piece by piece, or all in a rush, but suddenly he's running his fingers over her bare legs. And it's nothing like last time, when they were both so frantic that they didn't really get past oral. His hands are trembling, and he has to pull back. Sits back on his heels.

Her eyes flit open. "Are you... okay?" she asks.

He bobs his head yes, staring at her knees.

She sits up, brings her face close to his. Presses her forehead to his. "Tell me what to do," he says. "Please?"

She nods against him, finding his wrist and pulling it to the apex of her thighs, as she collapses back into her pillows. He can't take his eyes off her as she bites her lip and winds her legs around his hips.

When it's over, and they're lying next to each other, she leans over and kisses his shoulder.

"I have to go soon," he murmurs.

She reaches over and flattens his hair where it sticks up. He leans over the edge of her bed, fishing up his boxers from the floor.

"I'm glad you came over," she says.

He looks up at her as he buttons his jeans. "You should come to my place for lunch tomorrow."

"Yeah? Okay, I'll be there." She smiles softly.

He steals a final kiss before slipping out.